

New professional wide-format printers from Epson

The Epson brand has expanded its focus towards the CAD and engineering markets with the Epson SureColor T-Series wide-format inkjet printers and aims to snag 20% of this vertical market by 2015.

Vernon Mellors, LFP business account manager of Epson South Africa, explains, "Since the 90s, the focus point has been almost exclusively on photographic, fine art and commercial printing. The company has never built a product that's been geared specifically for the engineering, architecture and construction space, as the timing wasn't quite right."

"Three years ago, we took a look at this specialised sector again and realised that we had the technology to build on the feedback we received in our research and create a printing solution specifically tailored to the needs of these professionals."

The new line of professional wide-format printers are packed with the kind of features a CAD professional likes to talk about - improved performance, precision, print quality and cost of ownership.

The design and specifications of the new series and the new UltraChrome XD pigment ink have been based on direct feedback from architects and engineers, who consistently stressed the need for easy and reliable printers that make accurate, smudge and water resistant large-format prints quickly and cost effectively.

There are three models: the Epson SureColor SC-T7000, SC-T5000 and SC-T3000, all of which offer fast, reliable printing on coated and non-coated media up to 1118 mm, 36-inch 914 mm and 610 mm wide respectively.

Aimed at SME market

The T-Series printers are primarily for small to medium sized businesses that do not produce high volumes of printing. "We expect 80% of our customers to come from engineering and scientific sectors, with around one fifth of the buyers coming from business graphics and education fields and a small percentage being commercial printing and other users," says Mellors.

The T-series printers are ideal for the corporate sector, government and SME sectors, thanks to the built in features. All three models come loaded with all available features, with only extra option required being an internal print server for queue management, as an additional extra should a business need it. All can accommodate a variety of materials without any special mounting and the cloth catch bin has a 20-sheet capacity that keeps printed sheets in order so they do not have to be restacked after printing.

The T-Series printers are also designed to sit flush against the wall so that they can adapt to different office sizes and the

cartridge front-loading feature takes a variety of sizes from 110 ml to 700 ml. The company has also focused on ensuring that ease of use is a primary parameter when it comes to design - the controls, the user interface and the variety of modes are easy to locate and interact with - so users do not need to have extensive training in order to use them effectively.

"We're new to this market but we think we have the right mix of performance, quality and user-friendly features and the range also has the brand's promise of quality."

Cost of ownership

For any business, the issue will always be the total cost of ownership and the T-Series printers are designed to help keep costs down and reduce time wastage. In addition, as part of its commitment to service excellence and an understanding that businesses just cannot afford any delays or down time, the company has created a support centre that is open from 6am to 6pm, with next-day service from a technician who shows up with the needed part.

The products are well known for their "top notch, second-to-none" colour quality and reproducibility, Mellors noted and this series are no exception and hopes this will set the line apart from its well-established competition.

"We have our own print language, Epson Precision HD. What's unique is that we have Mac and Windows print drivers, guaranteeing that you get full print quality without needing a Postscript process in between, for example. If you're printing a PDF out of Adobe Acrobat, full precision and detail gets carried directly to the printer for an excellent-quality printout," concludes Mellors.

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